availability of phosphatic & Potassic fertilisers as per assessed requirement. However, to meet any sudden spurt in the demand of these fertilizers the Government is also maintaining buffer stock of DAP.

Chinese co-operation in pharma industry

4672. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indian pharmaceutical companies have discussed number of issues with the representatives of Chinese companies who were accompanying the Prime Minister of China during his visit to India;

(b) if so, whether both Indian and Chinese pharmaceutical companies have reached an agreement;

(c) if so, the main points of agreement reached; and

(d) to what extent China has agreed to help Indian pharmaceutical companies and has opened their way in China, so that both countries could gain lot of experience on pharmaceutical issue?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Sandhu Committee on drug prices

†4673. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Sandhu Committee has submitted its recommendations for providing medicines at cheaper rates to common men in the country;

(b) if so, the details of those recommendations;

(c) whether cheaper medicines would be available after the implementation of those recommendations; and

(d) if so, the details of the scheme to implement these recommendations in the country?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (d) A Committee under the Chairmanship of Joint Secretary (PI) was constituted to examine the span of price control (including trade margin) in the light of National Common Minimum Programme and the observations of the supreme Court in SLP NO (C) 3668/2003 and to suggest measures for fulfilling the objective of National Common Minimum Programme to ensure the availability of life saving drugs at reasonable prices. This Committee has submitted its interim report to the Government. The Committee has recommended, *inter-alia*, intensive monitoring on the prices of all those drugs out of the selected basket (National List of Essential Medicines, 2003) which are not under price control, ceilings on trade margins of drugs, a system of price negotiations for the new patented drugs, special schemes for people below poverty line, introduction of Rajasthan model of Life Line Fluid Stores (hospital pharmacy stores run by Medicare Societies) for bulk purchase of drugs directly from manufacturer and selling them at reduced prices, compounding of offences under the Essential Commodities Act, establishment of DPCO cells in all States on the model of Karnataka, price negotiations at the time of launching of a new patented drug, efforts to increase public awareness, wide publicity to policies and decisions of the Government and NPPA etc. Follow up action has been initiated on the recommendations of the Committee made in its interim report.

National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

4674. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the main functions of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority;

(b) the steps taken by this Authority to control prices of drugs;

(c) the details of cases of overcharging by drug manufacturing companies that came to light during the last three years;

(d) action taken against such companies for overcharging; and

(e) whether Government will make it mandatory for drug manufacturing companies to get prior approval for fixing Maximum Retail Price (MRP)?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (e) The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) was set up by the Government in August, 1997. It has been entrusted with the task, *inter-alia*, to fix prices and notify changes therein, if any, of bulk